

# Matching Rocking Chair

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## Matching Rocking Chair by Rulerofthefakeempire

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**Summary:**

He knows who his bed partner is.

The deduction is so easy it doesn't even require all his sense, not even half his sense. He doesn't know because of his hazy memories of last night, or the rhythm of the breathing, or the shape of this hand, dainty fingers waving over his hip. No, it's the cleanness of the sheets. The way that they're so starch white, so smooth, no crumbs or stains. All due to Eddie's perpetual fear of bed bugs, despite the fact that where he lives is too cold for that shit.

## Matching Rocking Chair

The morning comes like the ending of a story, a train collision. He knew it was coming, but somehow it still felt like a surprise. He watches the sun invade the shadow of the room; one of the curtains missing because two months ago Beverly made a skirt from it and Eddie's too cheap to buy new ones. He stares at the floor, dipping his hand in and out of the light like it's a puddle, waiting for the sun to come with him when he leaves. He runs his fingers through the carpet fibers and dribbles quietly onto his forearm.

The back of his heel on his left foot is pressed against someone else's flesh, and out of the corner of his eye he can see a hand resting on his ribs, limp in the air. The mattress is too warm for just one person and he can hear some breathing that doesn't sound like it belongs to him. He listens like its white noise, a hypno-track of indifference. "I don't know man, do what you want," it tells him, like a drunken life coach whose kids won't talk to him.

So he does nothing, thinks nothing, and tries to find the spot between asleep and awareness.

He knows who his bed partner is. The deduction is so easy it doesn't even require all his sense, not even half his sense. He doesn't know because of his hazy memories of last night, or the rhythm of the breathing, or the shape of this hand, dainty fingers waving over his hip. No, it's the cleanness of the sheets. The way that they're so starch white, so smooth, no crumbs or stains. All due to Eddie's perpetual fear of bed bugs, despite the fact that where he lives is too cold for that shit.

He slides out of the bed like a tablecloth trying not to disturb the tableware, taking the hand by its thin wrist and laying it down on the clean sheets like he's laying it to rest. He tries to find the movement in his legs, but he can't so for a moment he just stands there, sun on his back, staring dumbly at Eddie's face. He's all tangled up in his perfect sheets, naked except for a pair of boxes that Richie could have sworn he was wearing when they had started drinking. He tries to imagine what the appropriate response is meant to be. The sound of sirens enters his head, so he sits on that

thoughtful venture, scratches his belly, brushes some hair behind Eddie's ear and finds the movement in his legs.

He knows Eddie's apartment like he knows that comic book he read eighteen times when he was eleven, like that one coffee that comes from that one coffee shop two blocks away and the way back to his apartment from his local bar. He doesn't even have to think about the way into the bathroom, he doesn't even have to think about wiping down the seat with antibacterial wipes after he's done because somehow Eddie knows when he doesn't. He doesn't even have to think about which turn to take for the living room and the kitchen, or where Eddie keeps the coffee and the French press he brought from a market stall and spent a whole afternoon thoroughly cleaning.

When he goes for the milk he finds a note in his handwriting, expressing some sentiment, giving some instruction, but he can't make out the words. He hopes that his glasses are somewhere in the apartment, but instead of looking for them he sits down at the dining table, in the chair that he gave to Eddie after it was given to him after his aunt brought one too many for her table.

He remembers little, or maybe he remembers all that there was. It's hard to tell. He doesn't feel bad, like mistakes had been made; it's hard to feel bad when all you can remember is joy. He remembers walking back to Eddie's from the bar, the cold air against his cheekbones, Eddie under his arm, inside of each other's coats. He remembers laughing, stumbling shakily up the stairs, unable to keep each other at arms length, trying to bring the other into this joy. They make out at the door, not like it was new, but like how you have to take a bite of something to know how hungry you were. *Like fuck, did you see that? This shit is amazing; I was not prepared for this. Hey, do you have any speakers because there's this song that I really want you to listen to. Fuck yeah, lets dance. Oh, okay, now we're making out on the bed. Cool. Woah. I had no idea how much I wanted to see you naked.*

He scratches the back of his head, picks something out from under his fingernail, rubs his eyes and thinks about sex. He always figured he would bone at least one of his childhood friends, but he always figured it would be Stan. That's how it was in the movies; the two that hate each other the most would end up have amazing sex that

they would never speak of again. He figured that he and Eddie would grow up to be best friends in their twenties and then on until they were dead. When he imagined getting old, he imagined that Eddie was there in a matching rocking chair. It occurs to him that he may have been mistaking friendship for something very different.

And then he decides to leave that particular bit of psychological misplacement alone because it's a Sunday morning and he hasn't had his coffee yet. Instead he finds his glasses down the back of the sofa cushions, grabs a trashy magazine from his bag, two cups of coffee, and goes back to bed.

Eddie's got one eye open when Richie sits back down, readjusting his pillows, cleaning his glasses with the clean sheets. Eddie peers at him like a tiger between grass stems, planning his approach to the timid gazelle. Richie gives no indication that he knows, and instead sipping his coffee and reading his magazine and trying to feel grown up.

Until finally:

"The fuck are you looking out?" comes out of his mouth like he can't help himself. Eddie's eyes flicker.

"None of you beeswax."

And they're like homing pigeons, homing in; returning comfortably to a dynamic that works, that's been working since they were fourteen. So Eddie sits up, and picks disapprovingly at the fraying hem of Richie's boxers and Richie hands him his coffee, made the way that he likes. They don't talk about that. They don't talk about anything for a little while; just drink their coffees and point out the rumors they doubt about their favorite celebrities.

Until suddenly, and inevitably, Richie decides that this stalemate must end.

"I think we should go out. Like. Properly."

They're silent, not looking at each other, not changing their expressions, trying not to show any weakness.

"Won't it ruin our friendship?"

It seemed a bit daft to start worrying about their friendship now, after all these years of insults and occasionally sabotaging each other lives.

“I think our friendship can take it.”

“But what if we break up?”

“Then we’ll just cancel the wedding and go back to what we’re doing now.”

“That seems too easy.”

And then, Richie decides that having feelings is dumb, but talking about your feelings is worse. So he takes the coffees from out their hands, straddles Eddie’s hips, and revels in the expression of anticipation and disbelief he can coax out of Eddie’s face. Richie hold his hands like they’re a baby bird he doesn’t want to spook and lowers his face so that their foreheads are pressing together and he can feel Eddie’s breath on his face.

“I think you’re the shit, I clearly like sleeping with you. I’d like to think you think the same of me. If I die, I want to die knowing that I didn’t pussy-foot around with you.”

Eddie’s eyes widen and Richie’s feeling pretty good about himself until he hears what comes out of his mouth.

“Wait. Did you say ‘if I die’, because if we’re going to date and you’re not sure if you’re ever going to die, then I’m going to have issues with that.”

And then the joy comes back; full and lush like diving into the ocean and driving down the coast and eating summer fruit and its like everything has locked into place. The end game that was always the end game has arrived and they can finally get down to doing good things the way that they are meant to be done.

### **Author's Note:**

Yah, so, thanks for reading. or whatever. Damn that ending was cheesy